

GOSFORTH URBAN DISTRICT - NORTHUMBERLAND.

Council Chambers,
Gosforth.
October, 1941.

To the Chairman and Members of
the Health Committee.

Gentlemen,

In accordance with Ministry of Health Circular No. 2314 I beg to submit a very brief interim report on the health of the District during the year 1940; some details of the sanitary circumstances of the area are given in the Senior Sanitary Inspector's Report which is presented herewith.

When my report for the year 1939 was completed the official figures from the Registrar General had not been received; the figures for the years 1939 and 1940 are now to hand and will be used and therefore slight discrepancies may be noted between some of the figures now given and those in last year's report.

Where numbers are stated the comparative figures for 1939 will be inserted in brackets.

POPULATION.

The estimated civilian population at mid-year 1940 was 20,810 (20,650) showing a continued yearly increase.

BIRTHS.

264 (277) live births and 13 (6) still births were registered during the year; the birth rate was 13.6 compared with 14.6 for England and Wales.

There were no maternal deaths.

INFANT MORTALITY.

17 (5) deaths of infants under one year of age were reported giving a rate of 64.4 per thousand live births the corresponding figure for England and Wales was 55.

DEATHS.

There were 234 (202) deaths from all causes at all ages; the death rate was 11.24 per thousand per annum against a rate of 14.3 for England and Wales.

The increase in the number of deaths as compared with 1939 was not due to any outbreak of infectious disease or other preventable cause.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES.

Apart from Tuberculosis 506 (351) notifications were received; the large increase is due to the fact that Measles and Whooping Cough were made compulsorily notifiable in October 1939.

Only 13 (66) cases of Scarlet Fever and 8 (23) of Diphtheria were notified during the year - the high percentage of cases removed to hospital for isolation and treatment was maintained.

None of the cases of Diphtheria had been immunised' - there was one death.

157 (102) children were immunised by General Practitioners and 143 (40) at the Welfare Centre - a total of 300 (142) in the year.

6 (10) deaths occurred from Pneumonia and 2 (0) from Cerebro-spinal Fever.

TUBERCULOSIS.

Notifications were received in respect of 28 (19) new cases of Tuberculosis and 8 (10) deaths were reported.

Pulmonary Tuberculosis (Consumption) accounted for 26 of the 28 new notifications and 7 of the 8 deaths.

The total number of 'live' cases on the register at the end of the year was 73 (94) - of these 52 (62) were pulmonary cases and 21 (32) non-pulmonary.

CHILD WELFARE.

2099 (2005) domiciliary visits were paid by the Health Visitor and 143 (143) Child Welfare sessions were held at the Centre at which the total number of attendances was 7909 (7737) by 1115 (1023) individuals of whom 385 (405) were 'new' children; in addition 1785 (805) interviews were granted to parents at the office.

There was a considerable increase in the value of Milk etc sold at cut prices at the Centre and a decrease in the value of Milk, etc, given free.

ANTE-NATAL AND POST-NATAL CLINICS.

96 (93) sessions were held at the Centre at which a total of 753 (779) attendances was registered; of these 161 (183) were Ante-natal First Visits and 84 (94) Post-natal visits.

DENTAL CLINIC.

The total number of sessions was 28 (29) with an average

attendance of 8 children; in 79 (108) cases a general anaesthetic was administered.

GENERAL REMARKS.

The increase in the number of deaths need cause no alarm as the Death Rate for the District is well below the National Rate.

There was unfortunately a considerable increase in the number of Infant Deaths; the figures however, are not large and the Infant Mortality Rate is not much in excess of the Rate for the Country as a whole - 10 of the 17 Infant deaths were due to Prematurity or Congenital Defects and occurred in the first week of life.

No maternal deaths were registered as due to sepsis or other causes incidental to child birth.

In spite of the decrease in the number of births the volume of work at the Maternity and Child Welfare Centre has continued to expand; this work is of the greatest value in moulding the health of the younger generation.

The very marked decline in the incidence of Scarlet Fever and Diphtheria coupled with the considerable increase in the number of children immunised against Diphtheria constitute a very real cause for satisfaction.

War conditions have imposed many new duties on the staff of the Health Department which was augmented by the appointment of Miss Brenda Sykes as Junior Clerk on August 26th, 1940; in spite of difficulties a good year's work was accomplished by the staff whose loyal and valued assistance under all conditions I gratefully acknowledge.

Finally I wish to thank you, Mr. Chairman, and all the Members of the Health Committee for your continued support and great encouragement.

Yours faithfully,

W.H. DICKINSON,

Medical Officer of Health.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SENIOR SANITARY INSPECTOR.

To the Medical Officer of Health.

Dear Sir,

I have pleasure in submitting brief particulars of the work of my department for the year ending 31st December, 1940.

War conditions and Air Raid Precautions responsibilities interfered considerably with ordinary routine and caused a good deal of extra work for all concerned.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

WATER SUPPLY.

The whole of the District has a piped supply provided by the Newcastle and Gateshead Water Company.

No complaints were received during the year as to the quality, and no tests were made.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE, etc.

I am informed by the Engineer and Surveyor that no lengths of sewer were laid in the District during the year nor were any new dwelling houses erected.

RIVERS AND STREAMS.

The unsatisfactory condition of the effluent from the Fawdon Farm was not remedied at the end of the year but progress had been made in formulating a scheme of improvement. The effluent from the City Sewage Works at Fawdon was also far from satisfactory.

COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL OF REFUSE.

Regular collection of refuse continued during the year. The District was divided into four areas each covered by one squad of men provided with a motor vehicle, while a spare vehicle carried out relief work. Collection was made once per week in most parts of the District and three times per week in the Coxlodge mining village area from which a considerable amount of ash and coal dross is collected.

6456 tons of refuse were collected from premises in the District during the year, being a considerable reduction on the amount for last year, viz, 8175 tons. 3526 tons were disposed of by controlled tipping in the Brunton Quarry, 1564 tons were dealt with at the Regent Pit Depot incinerator - the amount being half that similarly dealt with last year - while 1366

tons were delivered to farms and gardens in the neighbourhood, it being interesting to note that this is more than double the amount so disposed of during 1939. War conditions obviously had an effect upon the quantity of refuse collected and materially increased the use of refuse by farmers and gardeners, while salvage operations reduced the quantity of refuse disposed of by tipping and incineration.

The average amount of refuse (excluding salvage) collected during the year per premises was 1.04 tons, and per thousand of the population per year - 323 tons, both figures being a reduction on those for the previous year, viz, 1.18 tons and 402 tons.

SALVAGE.

In addition to the ordinary refuse collection during each week a special Salvage Service was introduced and proved very successful, the public becoming salvage minded fairly quickly. The Service entailed a considerable amount of re-organisation and extra work, and credit is due to the whole staff for the splendid results during the year. Despite difficulties and setbacks the Service gradually became established as a separate collection for salvage materials, taking the place of the second collection of refuse weekly, which had been pre-war routine.

The regular and definite call for salvage materials from each premises throughout the District resulted in a large and even flow of materials, adding a considerable revenue towards the local rate, and also helping in the war effort; more than 400 tons of material were salvaged to provide an income of £1278 for the twelve months ending December 31st.

It is satisfactory to note that the District occupied a leading place in the Salvage Returns for the Northern area, and I should, in this connection, like to pay tribute to the splendid assistance rendered by the local Womens Voluntary Service who gave excellent support to the Salvage Service scheme.

GENERAL INSPECTION OF PREMISES.

The following is a tabular statement of the inspections carried out during the year:

Visits of investigation re complaints	214
Routine visits to dwelling houses, yards, etc.	3585
Inspections and enquiries re overcrowding	62
Visits to Council houses re vermin (other than bed bugs)	4
Visits to verminous premises other than Council houses	17
(7 visits re bed bugs, 10 re other vermin)	
Visits re infectious diseases and disinfections	410
Inspections of drains, etc.	273

Drain tests applied (42 water, 4 smoke)	46
Septic tanks and cesspools	22
Stables, etc.	20
Visits re accumulations	25
Rat and mice infestations	161
Re smoke nuisances	9
Factories with mechanical power	30
Factories without mechanical power	33
Shops Act, Section 10	9
Meat shops	152
Slaughter houses	11
Cow sheds	23
Dairies and milkshops	60
Bakehouses	16
Ice cream premises	14
Fishmongers	16
Greengrocers and fruiterers	42
Grocers	157
Fried fish shops	13
Visits re refuse and salvage collection and disposal	271
Visits re Civil Defence matters	155
Army Billets	56

In connection with the above visits, 272 informal notices were served during the year relating to 374 defects or nuisances of various kinds. 1 Statutory Notice was served during the year under Section 9 of the Housing Act, 1936 and was complied with. No Statutory Notices under the Public Health Act were served during the year.

FACTORIES, (including Bakehouses.)

The following is an analysis of the number and type of factories in the District:

Bakers and confectioners	12
Builders and joiners and cabinet makers	7
Monument workers	2
Welders and smiths	1
Garages	6
Electricians, plumbers and cycle repairers	2
Dressmakers and tailors	2
Railway car repair sheds	1
Coal, etc. Depots	3
Laundries	2
Confectionery packers	1
Drug packers	1
Boot repairers	6
Total:	<u>46</u>

<u>Premises.</u>	<u>Inspections.</u>	<u>Written Notices.</u>	<u>Prosecutions.</u>
Factories with mechanical power	45	1	Nil
Factories without mechanical power	34	1	Nil
Total:	79	2	Nil.

Both the above written notices were complied with during the year - one relating to cleanliness of sanitary conveniences and the other to defective bakehouse oven flue.

ARMY BILLETS.

56 visits to army billets were principally in connection with infectious diseases and arrangements for removal of refuse. In one case suggested work in improvement of surface drainage was carried out.

CAMPING SITES AND SWIMMING BATHS OR POOLS.

There are none in this District.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

DAIRIES, COWSHEDS AND MILK SHOPS.

There were on the register at the end of the year 3 cow keepers who were also retailers of milk, and the number of dairy cows kept was still approximately 140. There were also 26 purveyors of milk whose premises are within the District and 22 whose premises are outside the District.

There are four premises in the District used for the bottling of milk, two of which are in connection with farm premises. In only one case is there provided what is, in my opinion, a satisfactory method of sterilization of receptacles. In no case is there filling of bottles by mechanical means.

(i) One notice was served during the year in connection with cow keepers' premises and was complied with.

(ii) 24 samples of milk were taken for examination at the County Laboratory and the following were the results:

Test used.	Grade of Milk.	Samples examined.	Found	
			Satisfactory.	Unsatisfactory.
Coliform.	Ungraded.	19	13	6
"	Accredited.	2	2	0
"	"T.T".	1	1	0
Methylene Blue	Ungraded	19	14	5
Reduction.	Accredited.	2	2	0
	"T.T".	1	1	0
Plate Count.	Pasteurised.	2	2	0

Each unsatisfactory sample was followed up and endeavour made to secure an improvement of the quality of the milk at the source, by contacting the producer and Sanitary Inspector for the District concerned. I am of the opinion that there is room in general for a good deal of improvement in the methods of production and handling of milk, as producers and persons handling this important food often fail to realise the ideal medium it offers for the transmission of disease.

(iii) The following licences were issued to retailers of graded milk, in the District:

To sell Tuberculin Tested Milk	4
To sell Accredited Milk	1
To sell Pasteurised Milk	9

B. REGISTRATION OF PREMISES (Food and Drugs Act 1938, Section 14.)

45 premises were registered during the year under the above section, as follows:

Manufacture of ice cream.	3
Sale of ice cream only.	12
Manufacture of pies, sausages, etc.	24
Cooking of fish and fish products.	6
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	45
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All occupiers of food premises were circularised with details of Section 14 and requests made for a high standard in cleanliness and hygiene. While the general standard of premises may be classed as good, there is still room for improvement, but under war conditions it is difficult to secure the completion of works necessary for such improvement.

C. SLAUGHTER HOUSES, RETAIL MEAT SHOPS, ETC.

The two private slaughter houses in the District were closed early in the year on the centralisation of slaughtering in the City of Newcastle-on-Tyne, but 11 inspections were made prior to this occurrence in connection with the slaughtering of 4 cattle and 16 sheep, all of which were found to be satisfactory.

There are 24 retail meat shops in the District and one building used as a meat distributing centre. All were inspected regularly during the year.

The following foodstuffs were condemned as unfit for human consumption during the year, and it was possible in most cases to salvage the material for animal feeding or consignment to glue and chemical factories:

267 lbs. pickled pigs heads.	decomposed.
17 lbs. bacon and ham.	decomposed.
51½ lbs. beef.	bone taint.
7½ lbs. liver.	distomatosis.

HOUSING.

The inspection and recording of dwelling houses under the Housing Consolidated Regulations 1925/32 was not carried out during the year, the majority of works being dealt with under the Public Health Act. It became obvious that systematic housing work would be seriously affected during the war period and action under the Public Health Act for remedying defects proved useful without jeopardising any action which might become necessary under the Housing Act at a later date. In one case only was it found necessary to serve a Statutory Notice under Section 9 of the Housing Act 1936, and this was complied with during the year.

There were no proceedings during the year in connection with the closing or demolition of dwelling houses, nor were any formal steps taken with regard to overcrowding.

STAFF.

My thanks are due to my Assistant Inspector, Mr. Liddle, and to the other members of the staff for their work during the year, while it was also pleasing to note the success in the qualifying examination for Sanitary Inspectors of Mr. Gordon Bennett, a temporary Assistant in the Department, who later joined the R.A.F.

Yours faithfully,

W. COMBEY,

Senior Sanitary Inspector.